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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly reports on a two-hour workshop aimed at helping college students clarify values in selecting an employment setting. The module was presented to four subgroups of fifty-eight community college students. Each individual, with the assistance of his group, decided what was important for him or her in selecting an employment setting. Responses by students on a structured and open-ended evaluation at the end of the program were positive. Recommendations included implementation of similar modules in other career training settings, as an aid in helping students appraise their own value considerations and in increasing understanding of their needs by student development facilitators. (Author/PC)

VALUE DEVELOPMENT EMPLOYMENT MODULE

Richard P. Del Prete and Peter P. Twining

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Introduction

Joining and participating in a work setting is often essential ir today's environment, and provides an opportunity for one to meet his psychological needs.[1] Assuming employment responsibilities can provide an opportunity for the development of individual potential. Central to this human development concept is understanding by each individual as to why he has chosen his field of employment and what he seeks to gain out of this involvement.

Students in all phases of their education, often appear to be in confusion as to their values in selecting a field of employment an an employment setting that would foster the development of their potential. Student development facilitators are concerned about the implications related to the following questions:

Throughout a student's educational experience, how can we create an environment that will allow each student to feel free and comfortable to interact on affective and verbal levels as to:

1. Increase a student's understanding of personal considerations (values) in selecting an employment setting?

2. Compare the considerations as related to each student so that an understanding can be gained of what each person considers important and unimportant?

3. Increase the student's understanding of what is important to him in selecting an employment setting?

These questions encouraged the creation and implementation of the Value Development Employment Module. The module provides an opportunity for each student to choose considerations which were important and unimportant discuss them with other students preparing for their field of employment and begin to act on these individual choices in seeking employment. This experience allows and encourages both affective and cognitive exchange among the participants; further, the module provides an opportunity for close cooperation between student development facilitators and teaching faculty members.

Theoretical Base of Module

The literature of humanistic psychology, research on community college students and related developments in student personnel services, and current trends in society support the incorporation of this module as a component of a student's education.[2]

The Module aims to assist students in clarification of considerations which may be important to them in present employment setting selection. As significantly, the Module provides the process skills necessary to make successful adjustment to future societial and personal change.[3]

Programs with similar foci become more crucial as community colleges attract extremely diverse populations. Oftentimes, students of these populations may lack past positive employment experience, related self understanding and self confidence. The Value Development Employment Module provides the framework for current decisions related to employment and the process has significant carry over value for future employment. In our society, where change is rapid, it is logically anticipated that individuals will be faced with similar employment choices throughout their lifetime.

Definition and Objectives

The Module was a two-hour structured experience for matriculated students in nursing or secretarial science, during which time they participated with partners, and shared small and large group interaction. The Module's three objectives were:

A. To increase students' understanding of various considerations (values) in selecting an employment setting.

B. To compare the considerations as related to each participant, i.e. gaining an understanding of what each person considers important and unimportant.

C. To increase the individual's understanding of what is important to them in selecting an employment setting.

Nature of the College and Participants

North Shore Community College, located in Beverly, Massachusetts, is a co-educational public, comprehensive two-year institution of higher education. Approximately 2,200 full-time day students commute to the college. These students who participated in the Value Development Employment Module were enrolled in either the Nurse Education or Executive Secretarial Science programs. Similar programs were conducted for each respective group.

The Nurse Education students participating were enrolled in the course, The Registered Nurse in Contemporary Society and participation was encouraged by the Nursing program instructors. The participants from the Exeuctive Secretarial Science program included students primarily of sophomore status of whom many were planning to go to New York City. The purpose of this Secretarial Science Department field trip was to provide an opportunity for students to visit various employment settings. Other Secretarial Science program students participated in the module as they felt it would be valuable in seeking employment in other locations. A faculty member of the Secretarial Science Department participated in the workshop.

Synopsis of the Program

At the start of the two-hour program, the background and workshop objectives were presented. Participants were informed their role would be an active one. Worksheets were provided and participants were asked to record two considerations (values) of importance to them in choosing an employment setting and one consideration (value) which was unimportant to them. A total list of twenty-three considerations were recorded for information and understanding.

The process of forming a value[4] was then presented and discussed. The large group was divided into sub groups of four. Each individual with the assistance of his group was to decide what was most individually important for him or her in selecting an employment setting. To assist with the clarification process, each individual was asked to complete the following "I have learned" . . . . . Participants then returned to large groups, share their learning for information, understanding and clarification. The program concluded with an evaluation of the program.

Evaluation

The experience at both sessions was evaluated. Students responded on a structured and open-ended evaluation. Responses indicated positive reaction by the participants as recorded below.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION RESULTS
(58 participants)

Each participant completed an evaluation. Following are the results:

Self Understanding-Employment Choice Evaluation

Please check the space that represents how you feel each objective was met.

1. To increase your understanding of various considerations (values) in selecting an employment setting.

Completely	19	
Very Well	34	> 91%
Somewhat	5	
Not at all	0	> 9%

2. To compare the considerations as related to each participant, i.e. gaining an understanding of what each person considers important and unimportant.

Completely	15	
Very Well	34	> 93%
Somewhat	4	
Not at all	0	> 7%

3. To increase your understanding of what is important to you in selecting an employment setting.

Completely	27	
Very Well	25	90%
Somewhat	4	
Not at all	2	10%

4. General Reactions: Please select and check one of the following which expresses your feelings about the total experience. For me the program was:

Very Helpful	39	
Helpful	14	91%
Somewhat Helpful	5	
Not at all Helpful	0	9%

Reacting to the total workshop, the following comments are indicative of the participants reactions.

- Very informative . .
- Definitely be continued . . . .
- Helped me clarify in my own mind the things which are really important . . . .
- Interesting way to recognize objectives . . . .
- Helped me gain insight into my own choices . . . .
- I know what I want to do but some things were brought out that do deserve consideration . . . .
- Very worthwhile and was very needed . . . .
- An extremely important aspect of education for me . . . .

Discussion

The participants reactions and evaluations indicate that the Value Development Employment Module was successful in meeting the outlined objectives and participant needs. This experience appeared to assist with the clarification of considerations in seeking employment. The participants were able to review their values, deal with the challenges of choice, and through their sharing assist others in developing their priorities. Much of the discussion throughout the module centered around important concerns as to how each participant viewed himself and was viewed by others.

The discussion during one phase of the Value Development Employment Module indicated some of the considerations, i.e. salary, location, would lend themselves to easy measurement. Others were more abstract in nature, advancement, satisfaction, philosophy of the hospital and relationship to supervisors and peers. In these areas it is necessary for the participants through college program to increase their understanding so that they can be useful in selecting employment.

The implications following from each offering of the Module have much commonality. A written report was provided for each participant so that the results including the implications, could be used for further self development. In each case both faculty and students were left with implications for further development. They included:

- a need for more emphasis on appraising one's personal strengths and weaknesses and relating these considerations to understanding what considerations are important to each person.

- further development of opportunities for participants to examine all of selected considerations as well as those not chosen.

- combined development and availability of opportunities for students to test out their selection of important employment considerations.

Although the results represent a limited population, our experience indicated that other students have similar needs which could be met by a Value Development approach. Our program was not designed to measure the long term effects as related to such variables job satisfaction; performance and personal adjustment. They lend themselves to heuristically controlled research which explores these behaviors.

The Value Development Employment Module provided the vehicle for incorporating human development skills within a specific career training setting. Participants gained from this experience in furthering their understanding of the process of valuing the results of which can lead to a clarification of personal values as related to seeking employment. The student development facilitator gained an increased understanding of the needs of participants and actively explored appropriate programs for the future.

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